

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)

Steering Committee Meeting

March 7, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Resources Agency Bldg., Room 1311

Draft Meeting Notes

Associated documents/handouts:

- Agenda
- Draft Notice of Preparation (NOP) (brought by DWR)
- Letter from the Governor outlining a Comprehensive Vision for Water
- Letter addressing Longfin Smelt Ruling (brought by DFG)
- Draft Schedule for BDCP from the Public Outreach Working Group

Action Items and Key Decisions

- Paul Cylinder (SAIC) delivered a presentation entitled “BDCP Existing Ecological Conditions Chapter and Covered Species Accounts.” He addressed topics including the context and purpose of the Ecological Conditions Chapter (Chapter 2 of the BDCP document) and an overview of its contents. The Committee is asked to read the chapter and submit written comments by April 4.
- The State Water Resources Control Board will hold a workshop on March 19. This workshop’s purpose will be to gather information for use in preparing their strategic plan for the Delta, and to move towards implementing directives contained within the Governor’s letter. Steering Committee members from different coalitions will be asked to serve as representatives to the workshop.
- SC members who wish to receive notifications for WGs or TTs of which they are not a member should email Beth Gerbutavicius; they will be added to the cc list for the WG or TT that they specify.
- The Other Stressors Working Group will convene its first meeting on March 18, time and location to be announced. The group’s co-chairs are John McCamman and Brent Waltham. The group will meet every two weeks following the first meeting.
- The Public Outreach Working Group requests Steering Committee comments to its draft brochure and schedule. These need to be submitted by Monday March 10th. SC members with upcoming BDCP-related outreach needs will submit requests for public outreach materials to the Public Outreach Working Group.
- Working groups and technical teams will continue to meet as needed and will coordinate and work closely together on shared issues. Membership is still being worked out for working groups and technical teams.
- The March 21, 2008 Steering Committee meeting is cancelled. The next meeting will convene on April 4, 2008.

Updates

- Karen Scarborough reporting: The Governor has outlined his Comprehensive Vision for Water in a letter (see also Attached Documents/Handouts). In it, he identifies seven categories of work to be done. There are references to the BDCP throughout.

- Jerry Johns reporting: DWR is moving ahead with the BDCP EIR. The third draft of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) incorporates minor revisions to the last draft (see also Attached Documents/Handouts). The NOP will launch the formal EIR process, and DWR will hire a contractor to assist in working through the CEQA process in cooperation with the federal agencies working on the federal Notice of Intent (NOI). The NOI is currently being updated and the intent is to launch this and the NOP together and in cooperation.
- Jerry Johns reporting: The DWR report pursuant to the requirements of AB 1200, a bill authored by Assemblyman Laird in 2005, is now posted on the DWR website. The report was written by DWR and DFG and provides an evaluation of risks to the Delta. This analysis pulls from information provided by DRMS, Delta Vision, BDCP and other processes.
- John McCamman reporting: DFG has brought a letter addressing the longfin smelt ruling (see also Attached Documents/Handouts). The letter outlines the longfin petition process. The letter provides an overview of the importance of information derived from the OCAP and BDCP processes and commits to bringing longfin smelt science to the BDCP and other relevant processes for review. The longfin regulation adopted by the Commission has a 6-month life (through August 2008) at which point a listing decision or a replacement regulation will be issued. DFG is currently working to develop a replacement regulation by August.
- Tom Howard reporting: The State Water Board has issued a workshop notice for March 19. This workshop's purpose will be to gather information for use in preparing their strategic plan for the Delta, and to move towards implementing directives within the Governor's letter. The Board will be looking for ways to work in conjunction with the DV and BDCP. The Board has the responsibility to address the following three areas: a comprehensive contaminant program, interim actions for the Board and the agencies to take, and water conservation. A panel will be convened for the workshop which will include Phil Eliseenberg and John Kirlin for Delta Vision and Will Stelle and Jerry Johns for BDCP. Other representatives of BDCP will need to attend the workshop, and these will be chosen from the fishery agencies, water users, and environmental groups.

Existing Conditions Report Presentation

Paul Cylinder presented an overview of the "BDCP Existing Ecological Conditions Chapter and Covered Species Accounts" in which he described the context and purpose of the Chapter. The document will become Chapter 2 of the actual HCP/NCCP document, and will serve as a foundation for other portions of the document. It includes an overview of the planning area's physical and biological resources, and the nine Covered Species and three Covered Natural Communities and includes specific information consistent with the requirements of the ESA and NCCPA. It presents information sources used, an overview of ecosystem processes (as recommended by the Science Advisors), and includes more general descriptions of the plan's Other Natural Communities. The chapter focuses on specific information needed to develop the Conservation Measures portion of the HCP/NCCP, as well as to assess impacts stemming from the plan's Covered Activities.

The Committee is asked to read the document and submit written comments by April 4. Paul Cylinder discussed accessing the document which will be available today on the SAIC FTP site. The items posted will be Chapter 2 (Ecological Conditions), Chapter 12 (References), Appendix A (Covered Species), and Appendix B (a list of all species mentioned in the text, alphabetized by common name and scientific name). The “Read Me First File” contains a Table of Contents that links the reader to individual PDF files. Smaller graphics are embedded within the document and larger graphics are available as separate PDF files. Requests can be made to Beth Gerbutivicius for CDs. It was asked that reviewers submit comments in a standard comment form which is available on the ftp site.

The Committee discussed the approach to adding additional Covered Species and Natural Communities as the plan develops. The planning agreement identifies the process as beginning with an evaluation of fish species and as interfaces with terrestrial species are approached other species may be added. It was asked that a DFG staff person with expertise in NCCPs be added to the Habitat Restoration Technical Team. DFG will do this.

Working Groups and Technical Teams

Public Outreach Working Group

Karla Nemeth (co-chair) and Janet Barbieri (Public Outreach consultant) presenting. Jones and Stokes Associates has generated a first draft of a 6-page brochure that outlines the mechanics of the BDCP. A draft schedule has also been developed. A 2-page version of the schedule is also under development, as well as a power point presentation template (with graphic and photographs only) that will be available to members of the Steering Committee. The Working Group is endeavoring to prepare materials for the NOP release, which may happen as soon as mid-next week. It was asked that Steering Committee member comments on the brochure and schedule be sent to Karla Nemeth, Carl Wilcox, or Will Stelle by March 10. SC members with upcoming BDCP-related outreach needs should submit requests for public outreach materials to the Public Outreach Working Group.

Conveyance Working Group

Jerry Johns (co-chair) and Paul Cylinder presenting. The Working Group is now meeting weekly. In the two meetings since the last Steering Committee there have been several presentations. One of these focused on an overview of north Delta intake issues including location, fish facility siting, single versus multiple intakes, and fish screen design. There have also been presentations discussing potential initial model assumptions for hydrodynamic models, biological considerations to take into account as operating criteria are developed, and a review of the analysis of Options 3 and 4 (dual and isolated conveyance) from the Options Evaluation. The purpose of these presentations has been to frame the major issues relating to conveyance, including operational criteria to meet conservation goals, taking into account water supply and water quality considerations.

The Working Group decided that the technical teams (e.g., HOTT) do not yet need to convene, but will need to do so soon. The Group has also discussed the potential to bring in

Cal-Lite modelers to run real-time simulations for the purpose of evaluating what parameters drive the system, conducting sensitivity analysis, and assessing the effect of changes in water demand.

Habitat Restoration Technical Team

Dave Harlow (co-chair) presenting. The technical team has taken a few weeks off to allow SAIC to compile background information on the natural communities and restoration concepts which will be pertinent to potential restoration in 12 hydrologic zones. The team is now assessing the hydrologic zones for specific ecological restoration opportunities and working on individual zones starting with the Yolo Bypass/Cache Slough area. Detailed maps are being generated for each zone; the products are in draft form and are almost ready for distribution. The team has also discussed the scope and objectives of the HOTT team as it pertains to habitat restoration.

Analytical Tools Technical Team:

Campbell Ingram (co-chair) presenting. The technical team will reassemble and work on the process/methods document and will submit this for the Steering Committee meeting on April 4th.

Other Stressors and Water Quality Working Groups

Brent Walthall and John McCamman (co-chairs) presenting. The first meeting will convene on Tuesday, March 18, time and location to be determined.

Implementing Structure/Governance Working Group

Marc Ebbin (co-chair) presenting. The Working Group will meet today and will discuss a laundry list of potential roles and responsibilities including administration, implementation, adaptive management and monitoring, and regulatory compliance in the BDCP context. Melanie Roland (NMFS) will present an example of HCP implementation from the Washington State Forest Practices HCP and the City of Seattle Water Dept HCP.

Public Comment

Barbara Byrne (PCL): 1) Yesterday in the Conveyance Working Group the Planning and Conservation League (PCL) submitted a letter that outlined a list of suggested questions for the Working Group's consideration. Copies of this are available by the sign-in sheet for those interested. 2) CalSim Lite has been talked about as an efficient tool for screening; PCL requests that it be made available to interested parties. Paul Marshall (DWR) will do this.

Attendees

Management and Representatives

Karen Scarborough (Chair, the Resources Agency)
Marc Ebbin (DWR/The Resources Agency)
Cindy Darling (The Resources Agency)
Will Stelle (The Resources Agency)

Kenny Watkins (CFBF)
Tom Howard (SWRCB)
Frank Michny (USBR)
Karla Nemeth (Zone 7)
Tracy Ligon (Santa Clara Valley Water District)
Jerry Johns (DWR)
Richard Roos-Collins (American Rivers/Natural Heritage Institute)
Kim Delfino (Defenders of Wildlife)
Anthony Saracino (The Nature Conservancy)
Russ Strach (NOAA Fisheries)
Paul Cylinder (SAIC)
Steve Thompson (USFWS)
Laura King Moon (State Water Contractors)
Greg Thomas (NHI)
Brett Walthall (Kern)
John McCamman (DFG)
Tom Birmingham (Westlands)
Randall Neudeck (Metropolitan)

On phone

Greg Gartrell (CCWD)
Gary Bobker (The Bay Institute)
John Chillemi (Mirant)
Ara Azhderian (SLDMWA)
Ann Hayden (Environment Defense)
Jason Peltier (Westlands)

Other attendees

See sign-in sheets
